

“Awakened Parents – Healthy Children”



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■ Contents

1. Re-evaluating Parents’ Beliefs for the Child
2. Children’s Food: An Essential Message for Parental Awareness
3. Hunger and Naturalness — Nature vs. Conditioning
4. Why Should We Give Simple and Nutritious Food to Children?
5. Using Food as Reward or Punishment — A Wrong Mindset
6. Meal Timetable for Children — A Child Is Not a Machine
7. The Art of Understanding Children’s Hunger and Needs
8. Proper Eating Habits and Values for Children
9. Children’s Food and Their Independence
- 10.Children’s Natural Lifestyle

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❏ Preface

A child is the most delicate and innocent creation of nature.

The arrival of a child is not just the beginning of a new life — it is also the beginning of new responsibility, new understanding, and new thinking for parents.

Raising a child is not only about fulfilling physical needs.

It is a process of shaping a sensitive, aware, and responsible human being.

The main message of this book is this:

Before trying to change the child, parents should first re-examine their own beliefs, attitudes, and way of living.

Giving food, clothes, and education is not enough.

Building self-confidence, independent thinking, and emotional sensitivity is even more important.

In today's modern world, fast food, technology, and social pressure are slowly affecting the natural lifestyle of children. In the race for competition and performance, children often lose their innocence.

In such times, conscious, loving, and understanding parenting has become very necessary.

This book focuses mainly on food, but it presents a deeper journey of thought.

Food is not only nutrition for the body.

It is culture.

It is the first lesson of independence.

It is the beginning of shaping a child's personality and mind.

When parents learn to understand a child's natural hunger, emotions, and individuality, are parenting stops being stressful and become a loving partnership.

True parenting means guiding — not controlling.

It is our heartfelt hope that this book helps every parent take a step toward raising more sensitive, healthy, and confident children.

❁ Guide children with love — not pressure.

❁ Understand children — do not rush to change them.

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✍ From the Author

At the sacred moment of completing 65 years of my life, I have tried to offer society not a material gift, but a gift of thoughts.

Life has taught me that before shaping children, we must shape ourselves.

Often, in the name of love, we put pressure.

In the name of values, we control.

In the name of discipline, we suppress independence.

This book is not written to preach, but to begin a journey of thought.

If even one parent, after reading this book, listens more carefully to their child, respects their hunger and emotions, and guides them with love — my writing will be successful.

I believe:

❁ Before changing the child, learn to change yourself.

❁ Make food a value, not a deal.

❁ Balance independence and guidance.

This book is a simple reflection of my life experiences, observations, and love for children.

With love and gratitude,

Rajesh Nanalal Doshi

7/3/2026

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✦ Blessings / Best Wishes Message

Dear Reader Friends,

A child is one of God's most sacred gifts.

A child represents innocence, simplicity, and unlimited possibilities.

In a child's life, parents are not just caretakers.

They are guides, sensitive friends, and sources of inspiration.

This book shares an important message:

Before shaping a child, we must first shape our own thinking and beliefs.

In today's fast and competitive world, issues like food, values, and independence have become very sensitive. At such a time, this book offers parents a balanced and aware direction.

My heartfelt wish is that this book reaches every home, inspires thoughtful reflection, and becomes a guide for building a happy future for children.

With warm wishes and affection,

Kishor Nanalal Doshi

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♥ Dedication

With deep feelings...

To the precious stars of my heart —

Aayank, Naira, Durjoy, Kavit, Yohaana, Jeevika, and Naksh,

My dear grandchildren,

When you came into this world,
I was not physically present with you.
But the love and blessings of a grandfather
are beyond time and distance.

Time may have created physical distance,
but the bond of love never breaks.

As your grandfather,
my heart feels joy in your every smile
and sees a bright future in your every dream.

In your innocent eyes, I see a glimpse of God.
In your curiosity, I see the hope of a new world.

This book is not just a collection of words —
It is a silent inheritance of life experiences,
a loving message from a grandfather's heart,
and a heartfelt prayer for your healthy, aware, and confident life.

May God bless you with wisdom, good values, and a joyful life.

With endless love and invisible blessings,

— Your Grandfather
Chandrakant Nanalal Doshi

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Who Should Read This Book — and Why?

1 Parents (Both New and Experienced)

Why?

Parents have the biggest and most important responsibility in raising a child. Many times, we do everything with love — but without awareness. This book encourages parents to rethink their beliefs, habits, and attitudes. It helps them understand a child's hunger, emotions, and independence in a better way.

2 Grandparents and Family Members

Why?

Raising a child is not only the parents' responsibility. The entire family plays a role in shaping the child. Sometimes there is a gap between old traditions and today's needs. This book helps create balance between experience and modern understanding.

3 Teachers and People Connected to Early Education

Why?

Children are not only educated in school — they are shaped there. If teachers understand children's natural behavior and emotional needs, they can become more sensitive and inspiring. This book helps in understanding children's behavior and background better.

4 People Interested in Child Development and Psychology

Why?

The connection between food, independence, and values is not just a family topic — it is also a psychological and social subject. This book combines practical experience with thoughtful insight.

5 Newly Married Couples and Future Parents

Why?

Preparation for parenting should begin even before a child is born. If parents start with the right mindset and awareness, many problems can be avoided. This book lays a strong foundation for future parenting.

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6 Anyone Concerned About Children's Health and Values in Society

Why?

Today's children are tomorrow's society.

If children grow up healthy, confident, and sensitive, society will also become healthy and balanced.

This book goes beyond personal parenting and encourages social responsibility.

❁ Final Thought

This book is for those:

- Who do not want children to grow up just obeying orders,
- But want them to grow into independent and confident human beings.

If you want to understand your child —
you should read this book.

If you are in a hurry to change your child —
you must read this book.

❁ If you want to shape your child's future, be ready to change your own perspective first.

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Re-evaluating Parents' Beliefs for the Child

The birth of a child is not merely the beginning of a new life; it is also the beginning of new responsibility, new thoughts, and new awareness in the lives of parents. When a tiny infant enters a home, the walls are filled not only with sound, but with meaning. The future enters the house with the child. There are questions in its eyes, innocence in its smile, and the natural rhythm of existence within its being.

But with the arrival of a child, a silent process also begins — the testing of parents' beliefs. Raising a child is not just about providing food, clothing, and education. It is a process of shaping personality, thinking ability, temperament, and values. In this shaping, the greatest role is played by the parents' mindset. If this mindset is conscious, flexible, and sensitive, the child's development becomes natural. But if it is based on blind tradition, ego, or social pressure, it can become an obstacle to the child's independent growth. From here, the idea of "re-evaluation" is born.

Where Do Beliefs Come From?

Every parent tries to do what is right in their own way. They want the best for their child. But what does "best" mean? It is often defined by their own experiences.

The way we were raised, the way we were taught, the way we were scolded or praised — all these together create a mental framework. That framework then becomes "truth" for us. We do not question whether what was right for us will necessarily be right for our child.

Times change. Society changes. Knowledge and circumstances change. But beliefs often do not change. As a result, a gap forms between generations. The child is born into a new era but is measured by old standards. Philosophy teaches us that truth is not static; it changes with context. What was appropriate in one time may become unsuitable in another. Therefore, instead of preserving beliefs as absolute truths, it is necessary to examine them from time to time.

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Discipline or Understanding?

In many homes, discipline is equated with punishment and control. “Without strictness, a child will be spoiled” — this belief is very common. Discipline is indeed necessary. But there is a subtle line between discipline and pressure. When discipline is combined with understanding, it becomes guidance. When it is based on fear, it becomes restriction. A child driven by fear may become obedient, but does not become strong internally. Outwardly calm, inwardly fearful. A child raised with trust may ask questions, engage in discussion, sometimes even express disagreement — but becomes thoughtful. The child gains decision-making ability. Here begins re-evaluation.

Am I guiding my child through fear or through trust?
Can I see their mistakes as opportunities for learning?

Mistakes are a natural part of human life. If a child is not allowed to make mistakes, they lose the opportunity to learn from experience. Parents should accept their own mistakes and try to improve. When parents say “I’m sorry,” the child learns humility.

Comparison and Expectation

Philosophy says every being is unique. No two leaves in nature are identical. So how can two children be the same? One child may be calm, another energetic; one creative, another analytical. Yet we often compare — “Be like the neighbor’s child.” Comparison creates feelings of inadequacy in a child’s mind. They measure themselves not by their own ability, but by someone else’s achievement. As a result, self-confidence decreases.

True growth lies in acceptance.

Accepting a child means honoring them with their uniqueness. Recognizing their pace. Understanding their interests. Parents should also re-evaluate their own standards of success. Does scoring higher marks mean success? Does earning more money mean happiness? Society measures success by grades and status, but true success in life lies in inner peace, morality, and contentment. If a child

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becomes externally successful but internally empty, can we say we guided them correctly?

The Meaning of Love

Another belief of parents is — “Giving more means loving more.”

Providing more food, toys, and facilities does not prove love. True love lies in presence.

What a child needs most is time, attention, and acceptance.

In the rush of modern life, parents often remain busy. They give everything to the child, except their time. As a result, the child may become materially rich but emotionally empty.

Re-evaluation means accepting this truth —

Am I truly present with my child?

Freedom to Ask Questions

In many homes, the rule is “Elders speak, children listen.” But for a thoughtful society, questioning is essential. When a child asks “Why?”, they are not rebelling; they are trying to understand. If we suppress their questions, their curiosity dies. Curiosity is the beginning of knowledge.

Giving a child the opportunity to think independently is the first step in preparing them for the future. If they only learn to obey orders, they will not be able to make decisions in life’s complex situations.

Social Pressure

“What will people say?” — this thought often influences parental decisions.

Which school to choose, which subject to select, which activity to enroll in — these are often decided by social expectations.

But the real question is —

Is this decision in the child’s best interest?

Society changes. Options for activities and careers increase. Parents must go beyond their fears and social pressure to recognize the child’s inner potential.

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Communication and Sensitivity

Communication with the child is the foundation of this entire process. Not just hearing words, but understanding emotions.

When a child feels that their voice matters, they become more confident.

Through communication, parents' beliefs also evolve, because they begin to understand the child's perspective.

A Continuous Process

Re-evaluating parental beliefs for a child is not a one-time action. It is an ongoing process. As life changes, thoughts must change. Living relationships cannot survive with rigid beliefs. Parents should assess their own childhood experiences. Perhaps they endured pressure at some point. If they adopt the same methods, the harmful cycle continues. But with awareness, they can choose a different path, and the new generation can grow healthier.

The Final Message of Philosophy

The fundamental philosophical question is — “Who am I?”

Parents too should ask —

What kind of parent am I?

What is the foundation of my beliefs?

Am I ready to change?

A child is not our possession. They are a trust given to us. We are not meant to control them, but to guide them. Just as a gardener does not pull a plant to make it grow taller, but provides proper soil, water, and light — similarly, a parent's role is to nourish, not to pressure.

Final Thought

Before trying to change the child, let us learn to change our beliefs.

There should be freedom in love.

There should be understanding in discipline.

There should be trust behind guidance.

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When parents question their own beliefs, they do not become weak; they become more aware.

Only aware parents can shape a healthy, confident, and sensitive generation.

The child is the future —

And the future is born from the thoughts we hold today. ❀

Practical Steps to Become a Conscious Parent

Becoming a conscious parent is not an achievement attained in a single day; it is a continuous process. With the birth of a child, responsibility is added to the parents' lives, but awareness does not arise automatically. To become conscious requires effort, self-reflection, and a readiness to accept change. True parenting is not completed merely by expressing love; it is a journey of understanding, communication, and self-improvement.

The first step toward becoming a conscious parent is self-reflection. Every day, some time should be set aside to reflect on one's behavior and thoughts. How did I speak with my child today? Where did I get angry? Where did I lose patience? The courage to observe all this objectively leads toward awareness. When parents recognize their mistakes, improvement begins. Self-reflection dissolves ego and increases understanding.

The second important step is developing the habit of pausing before reacting. When a child makes a mistake or behaves undesirably, it is easy to respond immediately in anger. But a conscious parent understands that momentary anger can cause long-term harm. Taking a few deep breaths and thinking calmly before responding is more appropriate. This pause is a sign of emotional maturity. When a response comes from understanding, trust grows in the child instead of fear.

The third characteristic of conscious parenting is prioritizing communication. In many homes, command and control dominate. But peace gained through command is temporary; trust built through communication is long-lasting. Giving the child an opportunity to express themselves, listening to their emotions, and trying to understand them — this is the strength of a relationship. When a child feels that their voice matters, they become more confident.

Avoiding comparison is also a mark of conscious parenting. Every child is unique. Their abilities, interests, and pace of development are different. If parents constantly compare, the child may develop feelings of inadequacy. Instead, their

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individual qualities should be recognized and encouraged. Acceptance is the foundation of growth.

Viewing mistakes not as punishments but as learning opportunities is another practical step. A child is learning about life. They will make mistakes — and that is natural. If every mistake leads to punishment, the child will act out of fear. If mistakes lead to guidance, the child learns with understanding. A conscious parent asks, “What can be learned from this?” This approach makes the child responsible and thoughtful.

Giving quality time is extremely essential. Modern life has become busy, but a parent’s time is invaluable for a child. Setting aside some time daily exclusively for the child — without mobile phones or other distractions — strengthens the bond. During this time, playing, talking, or simply sitting together is enough. The greatest expression of love is presence.

A conscious parent gives the child small choices. From selecting clothes to deciding how to play — such small choices develop independence and responsibility in a child. When a child is given trust, they try to honor it.

Remaining free from social pressure is also necessary. Often, the thought of “What will people say?” influences decisions. But a conscious parent understands that the child’s happiness and development are more important than society’s expectations. Each child’s journey is different; they should be allowed to walk their own path.

Gaining new information and understanding is another step toward awareness. Learning about child psychology, educational methods, and modern research makes parents’ beliefs more scientific and practical. Willingness to learn is the key to growth.

Evaluating one’s own childhood is also extremely important. Parents should reflect on what was good and what was painful in their own upbringing. If they unknowingly adopt the same painful methods, the harmful cycle will continue. But with awareness, they can break that cycle.

Most important of all is unconditional love. A child’s achievements or failures do not determine their worth. When a child knows they are accepted for who they are, their self-confidence becomes strong.

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In the end, becoming a conscious parent is not about achieving perfection; it is a journey of continuous learning. Each day brings new situations, and each situation offers an opportunity to learn. Awareness means questioning one's thoughts, being ready to improve, and making love the guiding force.

In the process of shaping a child, parents are also shaped. When parents become more sensitive, more patient, and more aware, the child's personality naturally blossoms.

To become a conscious parent means
reducing control,
increasing trust,
letting go of fear,
and keeping love at the center.

This is the path through which a healthy, confident, and sensitive generation can be nurtured. ❀

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Children's Food: An Essential Message for Parental Awareness

Children are the future of any nation. They are not merely the happiness of a home, but the center of the hopes of society and the country. A child's health, temperament, thinking power, and inner strength — all of these depend upon the values and upbringing received in childhood. In that upbringing, "food" is a primary element.

However, it is unfortunate that we often understand food merely as a process of filling the stomach. In truth, food does not only nourish the body; it also shapes the mind, temperament, and life-perspective. Therefore, parental awareness regarding children's food has become extremely necessary in today's time.

In a child's upbringing, food is not merely nutrition; it is also a matter of relationship, values, and independence. What a child eats, how the child eats, and when the child eats — all three influence not only physical growth but also mental balance. Food is not just a subject of the kitchen; it is a reflection of the home environment and the parents' thinking.

In today's time, most parents feed children according to their own standards. What adults eat is given to children as well. But can a child's needs truly be the same as those of an adult? A child's body is in a growing stage. Their digestive system is delicate. Their energy requirements are different. Yet we impose our tastes, habits, and beliefs upon them. In this way, food no longer remains a natural process — it becomes a tool of control.

In many homes, the practice of force-feeding is common. "Take one more bite." "Finish everything." "If you don't eat, you will become weak." Such sentences are heard daily. The intention of parents may be good, but the method is wrong. When a child wants to eat according to natural hunger, they are following the signals of their body. The child knows how much is needed. But when we force them to eat, they gradually stop trusting their natural signals. In the long term, this process affects their self-control and self-confidence.

Food is not connected only to the body; it is also connected to the emotional world. When a child is fed under pressure, the joy associated with food slowly disappears. Mealtime becomes a moment of tension rather than happiness. Food should be a matter of joy — not fear.

The tendency to use food as reward or punishment is also widespread. "If you complete your homework, you will get chocolate." "If you do not listen, you will not get sweets." Such practices turn food into a bargain. Food, which should be a source of nourishment and affection, becomes an instrument of temptation and punishment. As a result, the

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child learns to see food not as a natural need, but as an emotional reaction. In the future, this mindset can lead to unhealthy eating habits and emotional eating.

In the modern lifestyle, the increasing addiction to fast food and packaged food has become a serious concern. Colorful advertisements, attractive packaging, and instant taste easily attract children. Parents too, due to lack of time or for the sake of convenience, begin to accept such food. However, such food contains fewer nutrients and more artificial ingredients. As a result, problems like obesity, digestive disorders, and other health issues are now being seen even at a young age.

Simple, home-cooked, and nutritious food alone is suitable for a child's overall development. Lentils, vegetables, grains, fruits, and fresh food items provide the necessary nourishment for the body. Yet, not only the quality of food matters — the manner of eating is equally important.

Nowadays, many children eat while sitting in front of mobile phones or television. When attention is distracted, the body is unable to properly receive and process the food. Meals should be taken calmly, mindfully, and in cleanliness. When there is a peaceful environment at home during mealtime, a child is able to eat with joy. Sitting together as a family for meals is not only nourishment — it is a celebration of relationship.

Food is also connected with values. If a child learns to receive food respectfully, avoids wasting it, and develops a feeling of gratitude, then that child grows into a sensitive human being. Gratitude for food teaches respect for life itself.

For a child, mother's milk is the most natural and ideal food. It does not only provide complete nourishment, but also strengthens the emotional bond between mother and child. The loving care received during the early stages of life plays a vital role in the child's mental development. Ignoring natural methods in the name of convenience is not appropriate.

There is also a deep connection between children's food and their independence. If a child is given small choices regarding food — for example, which vegetable to eat — they begin to learn responsibility. The role of parents is to guide, not to control. If trust is given, the child too learns to maintain that trust.

It is also important to understand the relationship between food and emotional health. At times, when a child feels stress, sadness, or loneliness, changes may occur in their appetite. If parents focus only on the quantity of food and ignore the emotions behind it, the real issue remains unresolved. A conscious parent tries to understand the emotions behind the hunger.

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A child's health does not depend on food alone; lifestyle is equally important. Fresh air, sunlight, and regular physical activity are essential for development. Playing outdoors naturally increases appetite. Excessive screen time reduces appetite and negatively affects health.

The core essence of this entire discussion is this — a child is an independent personality. The child has their own hunger, their own preferences, and their own needs. Parents must learn to listen to the voice within the child. When food is given with love and understanding, it supports development. But when food is given with pressure, fear, or temptation, it may become harmful.

It is extremely necessary to create awareness in society. In schools, health programs, and social platforms, proper guidance about children's nutrition should be provided. Parents must re-evaluate their attitudes. Feeding more or giving expensive food is not the measure of love. True love lies in understanding a child's needs and offering a healthy, natural, and joyful life.

In the end, children's food is not merely a matter of meals; it is a matter of values, health, and the future of society. If we feed children with love, wisdom, and natural balance, the coming generation will become healthier, more balanced, and stronger.

Understand the child's hunger.

Respect their needs.

And make food a source of joy and nourishment — not pressure.

That alone is the essential message of conscious parenting. ❀

Today's time is often called the age of fast food. Pizza, burgers, chips, cold drinks, and various packaged snacks are easily available in the market. Colorful advertisements and tempting flavors strongly attract children. Parents too, due to their busy lifestyles, often accept such food for the sake of convenience. In such a situation, conscious parenting becomes even more necessary. Children should not be guided through complete prohibition, but through understanding and balance.

First, parents must understand that completely banning fast food is not always the right solution. Sometimes, allowing it in a controlled and limited way is better. One day in a week may be kept special, when the child is allowed to eat food of their choice. On other days, simple, home-cooked, and nutritious meals should be given. In this way, a balanced attitude develops in the child.

The second important step is to make home food attractive and interesting. Children are influenced by appearance. Colorful vegetables, beautifully arranged fruits, small creative

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shapes in rotis or sandwiches can increase their interest. When food looks appealing, children eat with greater joy.

Involving the child in cooking is also an excellent method. Mixing salad, kneading dough, washing fruits — giving small responsibilities connects the child to food. When a child participates in preparing food, they naturally develop greater interest in eating it.

It is also necessary to turn off television and mobile phones during mealtime. When eating in front of screens, children do not realize how much they have eaten. The habit of sitting together as a family and eating calmly should be developed. Mealtime is not only for nourishment — it is a time to strengthen relationships.

Parents must also present themselves as examples. If they prefer healthy food, the child will learn the same. Frequently eating outside while advising the child not to do so will not be effective. Home food should become a part of family culture.

It is also important to give children understanding about food. With older children, parents can read ingredient labels together. If a product contains excess sugar or salt, it can be explained why it may be harmful for the body. In this way, awareness develops within the child.

Regular outdoor play is equally necessary. When children run, jump, and play, they naturally feel hungry. Reducing screen time and increasing playtime improves health and appetite.

The most important point is that food should never be used as reward or punishment. If a child is sad, instead of giving ice cream, parents should talk to them. Emotions should be handled through communication, not food.

In the age of fast food, conscious parenting means understanding, balance, and love. Teaching children how to make the right choices is true guidance.

The habits developed today will become the foundation of their health tomorrow. ❁

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Hunger and Naturalness — Nature versus Conditioning

Hunger is a natural and instinctive process in human life. From the moment of birth, a child experiences hunger and expresses that need through crying. This hunger is not merely a physical requirement; it is a signal given by nature itself, guiding the body toward nourishment and energy. But the question arises — do we truly respect this natural process in the child? Or do our customs, rules, and beliefs gradually suppress it? This is the fundamental conflict between nature and conditioning.

When a child is born, they do not arrive with bookish knowledge. They are not taught rules. No timetable is explained to them. Yet they know when to cry, when to sleep, and when to drink milk. This knowing comes from nature. It is naturalness.

The beginning of human life rests upon natural signals. When hungry, the child cries. When satisfied, the child becomes calm. When sleepy, the child closes their eyes. Within this simple process lies a profound truth — the body recognizes its own needs. This inner intelligence is a priceless gift of nature.

Hunger is the first and clearest signal in a child's life. It is the language of the body. Hunger is not only the feeling of an empty stomach; it is a dialogue between body and mind. When hungry, the child expresses the need with full intensity. When satisfied, they stop naturally. This balance is so harmonious that it requires no external interference.

However, as the child grows, another force begins to operate around them — conditioning. Conditioning includes family beliefs, traditions, timetables, social rules, and parental concerns. Here begins a subtle struggle — between nature and conditioning.

Nature says:

"Eat when you are hungry."

Conditioning says:

"It is mealtime; you must eat now."

Nature says:

"I am full; stop."

Conditioning says:

"You must finish what is on your plate."

This difference often creates confusion in the child's mind.

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A child's body knows its needs. It knows how much to eat. But when repeatedly told, "Eat a little more," or "This is not enough," the child gradually loses trust in their inner signals. Slowly, they learn that the external command is more important than the internal voice.

This process does not remain limited to food. It influences other areas of life as well. If a child learns to ignore their hunger, they may also learn to ignore their emotions. When inner signals are constantly suppressed, self-confidence and self-regulation weaken. The child begins to depend on external control.

Conditioning itself is not wrong. Conditioning provides structure. It teaches order and discipline. It prepares a child to live in society. But when conditioning stands in opposition to nature, problems arise. True conditioning is that which understands nature and supports it — not suppresses it.

There is a common belief that eating more means being healthier. Many parents think that if the child eats more, they will become stronger. As a result, children are often fed more than necessary. But nourishment imposed upon the body can become a burden. The digestive system suffers, and aversion toward food may develop.

The essential question here is — Do we trust the child's body?

Nature has given children the ability of self-regulation. If a child is active, cheerful, and healthy, their hunger is appropriate. Every child is different. Therefore, uniform standards cannot be applied to all.

In modern life, timetables are given great importance. Breakfast at a fixed hour, Lunch at a fixed hour, Evening snack at a fixed hour. Regularity is beneficial — but flexibility is equally important. If a child is not hungry at the exact time, forcing food upon them may create resistance toward eating.

Today, the conflict between nature and conditioning has become more complex.

On one side is natural hunger. On the other side is the attraction of advertisements and the marketplace. Colorful packaging and intense flavors influence children's minds. Conditioning now includes not only family traditions, but also media and commercial culture.

Nature encourages eating according to bodily need.

The market encourages eating according to taste and temptation.

As a result, the child forgets the difference between true hunger and greed. Sometimes they want to eat not because of hunger, but because of boredom, curiosity, or emotional emptiness.

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Hunger is not only physical; it can also be mental and emotional. Often, when a child feels sad, lonely, or seeks attention, they may ask for food. A conscious parent needs to understand these signals.

It is not appropriate to interpret every demand as hunger and offer food. Understanding and sensitivity are necessary here. If a child is taught the difference between hunger and greed, they can make the right choices throughout life. This is true nurturing — not suppressing nature, but understanding it and guiding it.

The question of “Nature versus Nurture” is not limited to food; it is connected to the entire outlook on life. A child has independent thoughts and feelings. If we bind every natural signal within rules and restrictions, they may lose their inner strength. When a child begins to ignore their hunger, they may also start ignoring their emotions. “I feel angry” or “I feel sad” — these internal signals too may get suppressed. What begins as neglect in the area of food gradually affects the entire personality.

Therefore, it is necessary to maintain balance. Values and discipline are important, but they should not go against nature. Teaching a child to sit at mealtime, eat calmly, and respect food — this is nurturing. But ignoring their hunger and forcing them to eat — this is against nature. Conscious parenting is the art of establishing balance between the two. Understanding the child’s hunger, respecting their pace, and gradually teaching healthy habits — this is the right path.

Nature creates a child with an inherent balance. When they run, play, and laugh, they naturally feel hungry. But if their life becomes filled with screens and sedentary activities, hunger may decrease. At such times, we may choose to force them to eat, when the real solution lies in changing lifestyle habits.

In the end, the question is not whether nature wins or nurture wins. The question is how to create harmony between the two.

True nurturing means understanding nature and supporting it. Let the child recognize their own hunger, give them freedom, and offer proper guidance with love.

Hunger is the truth of the body. Naturalness is the foundation of life.

If we allow a child to grow with their natural instincts and make nurturing supportive rather than restrictive, they will develop into a balanced, confident, and sensitive individual.

Respecting a child’s hunger means respecting their independence. The balance between nature and nurture is true parenting.

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❖ Let the child understand their hunger, preserve their naturalness, and make nurturing supportive — this is the true path of conscious parenting.

❖ Respecting a child's hunger means respecting their independence. Balance between nature and nurture is true parenting.

Values and naturalness — these two words hold immense importance in raising a child. Often, values are considered to mean rules and discipline, while naturalness is seen as the child's own desires and inner signals. In reality, they are not opposites; with proper understanding, harmony between the two makes true and balanced parenting possible. The question is not whether to maintain values or preserve naturalness — the question is how to keep both together.

A child is natural from birth. They eat when hungry, sleep when tired, laugh when happy, and cry when sad. This is their inner natural language. But to live in society, rules, schedules, and discipline are also necessary. From here, nurturing begins. If values suppress naturalness, the child becomes internally confused. But if values guide naturalness, balance is created.

For example, having a regular mealtime is necessary. But if at a fixed afternoon time the child is not hungry, forcing them to eat is not appropriate. Here, harmony between values and naturalness means maintaining a routine while adjusting the portion according to the child's hunger. If their stomach is full, instead of saying "Finish your plate," it is better to say, "Next time, let's take a little less." In this way, they learn to respect food while also trusting their body's signals.

Similarly, completely banning sweets or fast food may increase craving in a child. But arranging a limited portion once a week helps them learn balance. Here, values provide boundaries and naturalness preserves joy.

In studies and play, balance is equally necessary. Making a child study for long hours only in the name of discipline can exhaust them. On the other hand, giving complete freedom may lead to a lack of responsibility. Therefore, focused study for a set time followed by playtime teaches both discipline and enjoyment.

In the area of emotions as well, this harmony is essential. If a child gets angry and we say, "Being angry is bad," their emotion gets suppressed. But if we say, "Feeling angry is natural, but let us express it calmly," the child learns to accept their emotions and behave appropriately. Here, naturalness is accepted and values provide direction.

Values do not mean pressure; they mean guidance. And naturalness does not mean uncontrolled freedom; it means honoring the inner voice. Balance between the two is

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possible only when parents are sensitive and aware. They understand the child's situation, listen not only to their words but also to their feelings, and keep flexibility within rules.

In the end, keeping a child under complete control is not right, and giving total freedom is also not right. The true path lies in the middle. When values give direction and naturalness gives strength, the child's personality becomes balanced.

Harmony between values and naturalness is true conscious parenting. ❁

Values and naturalness — common challenges

1. Why does maintaining balance feel difficult?
Because parents often fear that giving too much freedom will spoil the child. This fear makes them stricter. Fear-based decisions break balance.
2. How does social pressure affect balance?
Comparisons like “Be like the neighbor's child” push parents to adopt rigid rules. They begin to value society's expectations more than the child's individual needs.
3. What impact does lack of time have?
In busy lives, parents prefer giving commands rather than having conversations. Explaining requires time, but commands give immediate results. Therefore, balance becomes difficult.
4. What is the difference between overindulgence and excessive strictness?
Overindulgence lacks rules, and excessive strictness lacks freedom. Both are extremes. The true path lies in the middle — discipline with love.
5. Why is parents' reaction to a child's emotions important?
When a child gets angry or cries, parents may also become emotional. If they react with anger, balance breaks. Responding calmly is necessary.
6. Why does the desire for “immediate results” become a challenge?
Parents want instant improvement. But natural development happens gradually. Impatience weakens balance.
7. How does the digital age affect balance?
Screens, advertisements, and social media increase children's desires. Parents either get tired of constantly saying “no” or give complete freedom. Finding a middle path becomes difficult.
8. What role does parents' own childhood play?
If they grew up in strict environments, they may adopt the same methods. Or conversely, they may give excessive freedom. Without reevaluating their own experiences, balance becomes difficult.

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9. Why is inconsistency harmful?

One day strict rules and the next day complete freedom — this confuses the child.
A stable and clear approach is necessary for balance.

10. What should be done amid all these challenges?

Choose trust over fear. Choose acceptance over comparison. Choose communication over anger. Choose patience over haste. Balance is not perfection — it is continuous effort.

✿ Final question:

Is perfect balance possible?

Perfection may not be possible, but awareness is.

Understanding a little more each day, listening a little more, and being a little more patient — this is true conscious parenting.

✿ Values give direction, naturalness gives strength — harmony between the two is the true path.

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Child Should Be Given Simple Food

A child is the most delicate and developing form of life. Their body, mind, and intellect are continuously growing. This development is shaped not only by education, but also by the small aspects of daily life. Among these, food holds an extremely important place. Food is not merely a process of filling the stomach; it is nourishment, it is values, it is a way of life. Therefore, what kind of food should be given to a child is not merely a question of health, but a question of conscious parenting.

In previous chapters, we understood that a child's hunger is their natural language and that harmony between nature and values is true parenting. Extending that understanding further, we arrive at an important conclusion — a child should be given simple food.

The word “simple” does not mean poverty; it symbolizes naturalness and purity. Simple food means food close to nature — lentils and rice, flatbread and vegetables, fresh fruits, milk, buttermilk, grains, and green vegetables. It involves minimal processing, contains fewer artificial colors and flavors, and does not burden the body. A child's digestive system is still developing; therefore, heavy, oily, and excessively spicy food is not suitable for them.

In today's time, food is often associated with taste, appearance, and luxury. Colorful packets, tangy flavors, and instant meals attract children. Pizza, burgers, chips, and soft drinks have become their preferences. Such foods may offer more taste but less nutrition. They contain high amounts of sugar, salt, and oil, which can prove harmful to a child's health in the long term. Obesity, diabetes, and digestive issues are appearing at a young age. In such circumstances, simple food is not merely an option; it is a necessity.

A child's body has a natural balance. When given nutritious and light meals, they eat according to their needs. But when food is extremely flavorful and artificial, the child follows taste rather than hunger. As a result, the body's signals become confused. Simple food respects a child's natural hunger and teaches them to trust their own body.

Simple food is not only beneficial for the body; it is also beneficial for the mind. Excessively spicy and processed foods often increase irritability and restlessness. Light and nutritious meals bring stability to the mind. The child becomes calmer and more attentive. In this way, the connection between food and temperament becomes clear.

Here again, the question of nature and values arises. Nature draws a child toward simple tastes, but market influences and society lead them toward intense flavors. If a child is

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given simple and natural food from the beginning, their taste buds are shaped accordingly. Then they do not feel the need for excessively salty or spicy food.

Simple food also teaches the importance of simplicity and balance in life. In today's time, materialism and the race for luxury are increasing. Children too are becoming part of this race. They prioritize expensive and attractive foods. But if from childhood they are given simple and natural meals, they will understand the value of simplicity in life. Simplicity will then reflect not only in food, but also in thoughts and behavior.

The relationship between food and values is very deep. Home-cooked meals are not just nourishment; they symbolize family love and care. When a mother or family member serves food prepared with their own hands, it carries an emotional touch. This feeling strengthens the child's sense of security and affection. Food ordered from outside lacks this emotional connection.

Simple food also connects a child with nature. Seasonal fruits and vegetables introduce the child to the environment. Mangoes and watermelon in summer, green vegetables in winter — all this helps them understand nature's cycles. In this way, through food, the child becomes sensitive toward the environment.

From an economic perspective as well, simple food is appropriate. Expensive and branded foods involve significant cost, while home-cooked meals are simple and affordable. This keeps the family's expenses balanced and avoids unnecessary spending.

Giving simple food does not mean never offering variety. Variety is necessary, but it should be limited and balanced. A special dish can be prepared once a week, but maintaining simplicity in daily life is essential. In this way, the child learns not excess, but balance.

The role of parents is extremely important here. A child observes and follows. If the elders in the home choose healthy and simple food, it becomes natural for the child as well. Behavior has more impact than words. Therefore, the family's food culture should be conscious and balanced.

The manner of serving food is equally important. A child should be given meals in a peaceful and joyful environment. If mealtime includes pressure, comparison, or criticism, it creates dislike toward food. Simple food becomes truly effective only when it is offered with love and understanding.

Conscious parenting does not mean fulfilling every desire of the child. It means making the right decisions in their long-term interest. Long-term health is more important than

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momentary taste satisfaction. Simple food is such a decision — it may seem ordinary today, but it becomes the foundation of a healthy future tomorrow.

In the end, giving simple food to a child is not just a matter of health; it is a matter of life perspective. In simplicity there is stability, purity, and long-term well-being. If we adopt simplicity in raising a child, it will reflect in their thoughts, behavior, and life as well.

- ❖ Simplicity nourishes the body.
- ❖ Simplicity stabilizes the mind.
- ❖ Simplicity brings balance to life.

❖ Giving a child simple, nutritious, and lovingly served food — that is true parenting and responsibility.

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Using Food as a Reward or Punishment – A Misguided Mindset

Food is a fundamental necessity of human life. It nourishes the body, provides energy, and sustains life. Food holds an extremely important place in a child's development. However, when food is not seen merely as nourishment but is used as a reward or punishment, it deeply affects a child's mind and behavior. This tendency may appear normal on the surface, but its long-term effects can be serious.

In many homes, parents use food to motivate children. "If you finish your homework, you'll get chocolate," or "If you score good marks in the exam, we'll give you ice cream" — such statements seem common to us. On the other hand, threats like "If you don't listen, you won't get sweets," or "If you don't finish your meal, you won't be allowed to go out and play" are also frequently heard. In this way, food is used both as a reward and as a punishment. But the question is whether this kind of use of food is appropriate.

The primary purpose of food is to satisfy the body's hunger. When it is given as a reward, the child learns to see food not as nourishment, but as temptation. They begin to feel that certain types of food are "special" and must be earned by doing something. This creates an unhealthy relationship with food. The child learns to eat not because of hunger, but for the sake of reward.

This tendency also affects the child's intrinsic motivation. If a child studies only to receive chocolate, they will not understand the true value of studying. They will value the reward rather than the task itself. Gradually, their inner motivation weakens. They begin to seek external incentives for every task. Later in life, they may expect rewards for every effort they make.

Using food as punishment is even more harmful. Statements like "If you don't eat, you won't get sweets," or "If you misbehave, we won't give you food," create fear and insecurity in a child's mind. Food is a basic necessity of life; withholding it as punishment suppresses a fundamental need. As a result, the child associates food with fear. Eating no longer remains a joyful act, but becomes a source of stress.

Making food a reward causes another harm — the child becomes more attracted to tasty but less nutritious food. Usually sweets, chocolates, or fast food are given as rewards. As a result, the child develops the belief that "junk food is special" and "simple food is ordinary." This mindset can distort eating habits and negatively affect long-term health.

This tendency also influences a child's moral development. If every good action is rewarded and every wrong behavior is punished, the child learns to value outcomes

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rather than goodness itself. They will not seek the joy of doing good, but the joy of receiving a reward. In this way, the use of food affects a child's values and thinking patterns.

From a parent's perspective, this method may seem easy and immediately effective. The child completes homework for chocolate or finishes meals out of fear of losing sweets. But this short-term success can become harmful in the long run. Guiding a child with understanding and love may be more challenging, but it is the true and lasting path.

Communication and understanding with the child are far more important. If they are unwilling to study, one should try to understand the reason behind it. If they do not finish their meal, perhaps they are not hungry or may be tired. Instead of making food a reward or punishment, parents should try to understand the child's needs and emotions.

Food should be accepted in its original form — as nourishment and a means of life. It should be given with love, not pressure. Mealtime should have a joyful and peaceful atmosphere. Children should be taught that the value of good actions lies in inner satisfaction, not in external rewards.

Society also needs awareness in this matter. Schools and families should teach children healthy eating habits and proper values. Food should not be treated as a bargaining tool, but as an integral part of life.

In the end, using food as a reward or punishment is a misguided mindset. It affects a child's health, psychological development, and moral values. True parenting means guiding a child with love, understanding, and respect.

❁ Food is a symbol of nourishment, not negotiation. Give food to a child with love, not as a reward or punishment — that is true wisdom.

Long-Term Psychological Effects of Making Food a Reward

Food is a basic necessity of human life. It nourishes the body, provides energy, and sustains life. Food holds immense importance in a child's development, as physical growth, mental stability, and intellectual development depend on diet. But when food is used not merely as nourishment but as a reward, it leaves deep and sometimes invisible long-term effects on a child's mind.

In many homes, food is used to motivate children. "If you finish your homework, you'll get chocolate," or "If you score good marks, we'll give you ice cream" — such statements have become common. On the surface, this method appears effective because the child completes the task immediately. However, a subtle shift occurs — the child begins to value

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the reward rather than the task itself. Their intrinsic motivation gradually decreases, and they start expecting external incentives for every action. This mindset may later appear in every area of life.

Another serious effect of making food a reward is the unhealthy link formed between food and emotions. When a child is sad and is calmed with sweets, or celebrations always involve fast food, they learn that food is a tool to change emotions. Gradually, emotional eating patterns develop. As they grow older, they may develop habits of overeating during stress, loneliness, or failure, because that is what they were taught in childhood.

Moreover, making food a reward creates classification in the child's mind — “special” and “ordinary.” Chocolates, sweets, and junk food become “special,” while nutritious meals like lentils and vegetables appear ordinary or unimportant. As a result, the child's taste and preferences become imbalanced. Over time, this affects healthy eating habits.

When food is linked with punishment, the impact becomes even more negative. Statements like “If you don't listen, you won't get sweets” create fear and insecurity. Food is a basic need of life; attaching conditions to it disturbs the child's natural relationship with food. The child behaves out of fear, not understanding.

In conclusion, making food a reward is a misguided mindset because it weakens intrinsic motivation, entangles food with emotions, and fosters unhealthy habits. True guidance lies in teaching children to find joy in the inner satisfaction of good actions, while allowing food to remain simply a source of nourishment and love.

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A Meal Schedule for Children – A Child Is Not a Machine, but a Living Being

In modern lifestyles, the importance of schedules has increased greatly. School time, study time, playtime, and mealtime — everything is tied to the hands of the clock. Discipline and regularity are necessary for life, but the question is whether such rigid scheduling is always appropriate for a child's natural development. Especially regarding food, should a child be fed at a fixed time like a machine? Or is a child a living, sensitive being with changing needs?

A child's body is constantly developing. Their hunger does not remain the same every day. Sometimes they play more and use more energy, so they feel hungrier. Sometimes they are tired and eat less. These natural variations are part of life. If we decide to feed a child only at a fixed time and in a fixed quantity, we ignore their natural needs.

The purpose of a schedule is to bring order, but when it becomes rigid and unchanging, it can turn into a tool of pressure. Often parents say, "It's mealtime now, you must eat now," even if the child is not hungry. In this way, the child learns to suppress their hunger signals. Gradually, they may lose trust in their own internal needs. This is not just about food; it is about their self-regulation and self-confidence.

A child is not a machine that needs fuel at a precise time. A machine has no emotions, no fatigue, no mood. But a child is alive — they have feelings, moods, and energy levels that change daily. Sometimes they are happy and eat joyfully; sometimes they are sad and eat less. These changes are natural. If we label every change as a "lack of discipline," it is unfair to the child.

In modern life, the need for scheduling cannot be completely denied. Regular mealtimes can be beneficial for a child's health. But this regularity should be flexible. If a child feels hungry a little later, they should be allowed to eat later. If they are very hungry, they should be allowed to eat a little more. This flexibility supports the child's natural development.

Many parents fear that without a schedule, a child's habits will be spoiled. But true habits develop through understanding, not pressure. If a child is explained why regular meals are important for the body, they will adopt discipline on their own. Discipline does not mean pressure; it means understanding and acceptance.

While planning a child's diet, it is necessary to consider their age, temperament, and daily activities. For younger children, several small meals a day may be appropriate, while for older children, three main meals and two snacks may be suitable. However, these are

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guidelines, not strict rules. Every child is different; therefore, one fixed schedule may not suit everyone.

Another problem related to scheduling is that food is often eaten in haste. Due to school timings or other activities, meals are rushed. This haste affects the digestive system and may create dislike toward food. Mealtime should have a calm and joyful environment. The child should get the opportunity to eat slowly, chew properly, and enjoy the meal.

While creating a meal schedule, the family environment is also important. If the family sits and eats together, it can become a joyful experience for the child. This time can become not just about eating, but about conversation and sharing feelings. In this way, the schedule becomes human rather than mechanical.

Today, children face increasing academic and other pressures. In such times, if food also becomes a source of pressure, it can affect their mental health. Therefore, food should be associated with joy and comfort. The child should understand that meals are a natural and pleasant part of life, not a duty.

In the end, a meal schedule for children is necessary, but it should be flexible and sensitive. A child is not a machine that needs fuel at a precise time. They are living beings with emotions, thoughts, and changing needs. True parenting lies in balancing discipline with naturalness.

✿ Guide a child not by the clock, but by understanding. A schedule is necessary, but respecting a child's natural hunger and emotions is true discipline.

What Other Methods Can Be Used to Increase Intrinsic Motivation in Children

Developing intrinsic motivation in children is an important responsibility of parents. Intrinsic motivation means a child performs a task out of their own will and understanding, not out of fear, pressure, or the temptation of rewards. Such motivation lasts a lifetime and makes a child responsible, confident, and independent. Therefore, instead of giving external rewards, it is more important to awaken inner motivation.

The foundation of intrinsic motivation lies in acceptance and love. When a child knows they are accepted for who they are, they become fearless in making efforts. If they expect praise or rewards for every task, their motivation becomes external. But if their effort is appreciated, they learn to value effort over results. Words like "You worked very hard" increase a child's self-confidence.

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Another important element is freedom of choice. When a child is given the opportunity to make choices, even in small matters, they feel a sense of responsibility. Simple questions like “Will you do your homework first or after playing?” create a sense of ownership. In this way, they learn to be responsible for their decisions.

Security in accepting failure also strengthens intrinsic motivation. If a child is made afraid of making mistakes, they may avoid trying. But if they are taught that mistakes are part of the learning process, they will try more enthusiastically. Where there is less fear, motivation flourishes more.

Recognizing a child’s interests and curiosity is also extremely important. Every child is different. Some may like music, some painting, and some mathematics. Where there is interest, motivation arises naturally. Parents should encourage a child’s interests rather than compare them with others.

Communication also plays a key role in intrinsic motivation. Instead of giving orders, asking questions like “What do you think?” encourages the child to reflect. In this way, they learn to act with understanding.

In conclusion, intrinsic motivation is born from trust, freedom, and acceptance. Guiding a child with love, giving them the opportunity to think, and appreciating their effort — this is the true method. Motivation gained through rewards is temporary, but motivation born from within stays for life. ❁

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How to Recognize Children's Hunger and Needs

A child's life is a continuous journey of development. From birth, they express their needs through signals, but those signals are not always in words. A child often expresses needs through crying, irritability, quiet behavior, or sudden changes in mood. True parenting lies in parents and caregivers learning the art of understanding this silent language. Especially recognizing hunger and other basic needs is extremely important, as they are directly connected to a child's physical and mental development.

Hunger is a natural and physical process. When a baby is born, they feel hunger and express it by crying. Gradually, they learn to understand and express their body's signals. However, many times adults ignore these signals due to their own beliefs and rules. Statements like "It's not time to eat now," "Eat only this much," or "You must finish everything" suppress the child's natural cues. Therefore, the first requirement is observation.

The best way to recognize a child's hunger is to observe them carefully. In small children, licking lips, chewing fingers, increased restlessness, or searching for the breast or bottle may be early signs of hunger. Crying is often a late signal. Older children can clearly say they are hungry, but sometimes they may express hunger through irritability or lack of attention. Parents should develop the sensitivity to understand these signals.

It is also important to understand the difference between hunger and temptation. In today's time, children are attracted to colorful and tasty foods. If a child specifically asks for sweets or chips but refuses regular meals, it may not be hunger but temptation. If true hunger exists, the child will accept any nutritious food. Understanding this difference helps parents make appropriate decisions.

A child's needs are not limited only to food. Often a child may need a hug, conversation, or companionship. Sometimes they may be sad, feel lonely, or be tired, and in such cases they may ask for food. In these situations, instead of offering food immediately, it is necessary to understand their emotions. True parenting means giving equal importance to emotional needs as to physical needs.

A child's daily behavior also communicates many things. If a child suddenly begins to eat less, perhaps they are ill or under mental stress. If they eat very quickly, perhaps they have previously experienced pressure during meals. In this way, eating behavior may reflect a child's inner experiences. Parents should not ignore such changes but try to understand them.

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It is also important to understand the natural cycle of hunger. A child will not eat the same quantity every day. Sometimes they play more and use more energy, so they feel hungrier. Sometimes they are tired or in a growth phase, and changes in eating patterns are visible. These variations are natural. If parents expect the same amount every day, it may create unnecessary worry and pressure.

Communication with the child is also important. Older children should be asked questions like, "Are you still hungry?", "Is your stomach full?" or "How do you feel after eating this food?" These questions give the child an opportunity to recognize their hunger and emotions. When a child says they have had enough, their words should be trusted. This trust strengthens their self-confidence.

Food and needs should not be made into a matter of discipline. If a child is pressured to eat, they may learn to ignore their body's signals. In the long term, this can disturb their eating habits. Children should be guided that regular and nutritious meals are important for the body, but they should be given freedom and trust while eating.

Keeping a daily routine record can also be helpful for observation. Noting when the child feels more hungry, when they eat less, and what changes appear in their behavior helps parents understand their needs better. With a few days of careful attention, patterns may become clear.

In conclusion, recognizing children's hunger and needs is a sensitive and responsible task. A child is not a machine that needs fuel at a fixed time. They are living beings with emotions, thoughts, and changing needs. Parents should adopt the path of trust and communication instead of pressure.

✿ Listen to a child's language — whether it is in words or signals. Respect their hunger, understand their emotions, and guide them with love — that is true parenting.

How to Differentiate Between Hunger and Sleep Needs in Young Children

Young children cannot express their needs through words; they communicate through crying, irritability, or body language. Therefore, the greatest responsibility of parents is to correctly understand these signals. Especially distinguishing between hunger and sleep is extremely important, because both needs may appear to be expressed in similar ways.

Hunger is a natural bodily need. When a child feels hungry, they usually begin licking their lips, putting their hands in their mouth, or making sucking movements. Initially, the crying may be soft and gentle, but it gradually increases. If two or three hours have passed since the last feeding, the likelihood of hunger is higher. If the child calms down immediately upon receiving food and begins to eat attentively, it is a clear sign that they were hungry.

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The need for sleep is equally important. When a child becomes tired, they rub their eyes, yawn repeatedly, or try to cling closely. Sometimes they suddenly become very irritable or overly excited. If after offering food the child does not calm down and eats only a little before turning away, it is likely that they are sleepy. It is important to note that a tired child may sometimes show reactions similar to hunger, but the underlying cause is sleep. Observing timing helps in understanding this difference. When did the child last eat, and when did they last sleep? These two questions guide parents. Often children also become tired due to excessive noise, light, or overstimulation from toys. In such cases, they are not hungry but in need of rest.

An important point is that parents should not rush. Instead of immediately offering food, gently holding the child, calming the environment, or providing comforting interaction may prove helpful. Gradually, parents begin to recognize their child's unique "language." In conclusion, both hunger and sleep are essential for a child's healthy development.

Recognizing the correct signals and offering the right support at the right time is the foundation of sensitive and aware parenting. 🌿

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Eating Habits and Values in Children

Food is a fundamental necessity of human life, but it is not merely the process of filling the stomach. The way we eat, the time we eat, and the culture surrounding food — all these shape a person's character and life values. Especially for children, food is not just nourishment, but a foundation of values. The way a child learns to eat is the way they learn to live. Therefore, it is extremely important to provide proper guidance in both eating habits and values.

When a child is born, eating comes naturally — they feel hunger and they eat. But as they grow in society, they learn discipline and culture around food. “Wash your hands before eating,” “Sit calmly while eating,” “Respect food” — all these are part of values. If a child learns these from early childhood, they remain with them for life.

The first important aspect of eating habits is cleanliness. Washing hands before meals, eating in clean utensils, and keeping the eating area clean are necessary for health. But this is not only about health; it is the beginning of responsibility and an orderly life. When a child understands the importance of cleanliness, they adopt orderliness in other areas of life as well.

Another important aspect is eating peacefully. In today's time, many children eat while using mobile phones, watching television, or facing other distractions. This diverts attention from food. The act of eating should be mindful and joyful. When a child eats slowly, chews properly, and pays attention, they receive both the taste and nutrition of food properly. At the same time, they learn concentration and patience.

Respecting food is also an important value. Often children waste food or leave it unfinished on their plate. If they are taught that food comes through effort and hard work, they learn to respect it. This value makes a child grateful and sensitive. Respecting food means showing respect toward nature and society.

The tradition of eating together as a family is also significant. When all family members sit and eat together, it becomes not just mealtime, but a time for conversation and sharing feelings. In such an environment, a child learns communication skills, cooperation, and social behavior. In this way, meals become a living lesson in values.

While teaching children how to eat, pressure or humiliation should not be used. Statements like “You must eat this way” or “You are eating wrongly” may affect a child's self-confidence. Guidance should be given with love and understanding. The child should be made to understand that discipline is for their well-being, not for punishment.

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An important part of values is moderation. Overeating or eating in an uncontrolled manner is not healthy. Children should be taught to eat only as much as their body needs. This moderation applies not only to food, but to all areas of life. With moderation, life becomes balanced and joyful.

Developing a sense of gratitude for food is also necessary. Taking a moment before eating to express thanks — whether through prayer or silent reflection — nurtures gratitude in a child. This feeling makes them humble and sensitive. Respecting what one receives in life is true value.

In today's world, variety and attraction in food have increased. The influence of outside food and fast food also affects children. In such circumstances, parents must maintain balance. Children should be allowed to try new things, but at the same time, they should understand the importance of nutritious and home-cooked food. In this way, the child learns to make thoughtful choices.

Eating habits and values are not limited to physical health; they are also connected to mental and moral development. Eating calmly, with moderation and respect, brings peace and balance in life. If a child sees meals not merely as a matter of taste but as a meaningful part of life, they may grow into a more aware and responsible person.

In conclusion, teaching children proper eating habits and values is not merely a matter of discipline; it is the foundation of character building. Through food, a child can learn cleanliness, moderation, gratitude, cooperation, and respect.

✿ Teaching a child the right way to eat is teaching them the right way to live. When you add values to food, you add culture to life.

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Children's Food and Children's Independence

A child's life is a continuous process of development. From birth, they move toward learning, understanding, and building their own identity. In this entire journey of growth, food holds an extremely important place. Food not only nourishes the body, but is also deeply connected to a child's independence, self-confidence, and personality development. When food is given with love and understanding, it strengthens a child's independence; but when it is used as a tool of pressure, control, or discipline, it can create restrictions in the child's mind.

Independence means the ability to recognize and express one's own needs and feelings. When a child says, "I am hungry," or "I've had enough," they are expressing their inner needs. If parents respect this voice, the child learns to trust their own understanding. But if they are repeatedly ignored — "Eat more," "You must finish this" — they begin to doubt their own feelings. In this way, food becomes the first test of a child's independence.

In many homes, food becomes a means of control. It is used to maintain discipline. Sometimes a child is force-fed, and sometimes food is given as a reward or punishment. Through such methods, the child may feel that their choices and needs do not matter. For independence to grow, trust is essential. A child should feel confident that their voice will be heard and that their body's signals will be respected.

Giving independence in food does not mean giving complete freedom without guidance. It means freedom with direction. The role of parents is that of a guide, not a controller. For example, by offering nutritious options and allowing the child to choose between them — "Would you like lentils and rice or flatbread and vegetables?" — simple choices help develop decision-making ability. In this way, the child learns to make responsible choices not only in food, but in other areas of life as well.

Independence and responsibility are closely connected. If a child is allowed to recognize their hunger and eat according to their need, they gradually learn self-control. But if they are constantly controlled, they may either rebel or become completely dependent. Neither situation supports healthy growth.

Today, children face various pressures — academic, social, and technological. In such times, if food also becomes a source of pressure, it can affect their mental health. Mealtime should be a time of joy and peace, not fear and restriction. When a child feels safe and respected during meals, trust and self-respect develop within them.

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Giving independence in food means teaching a child to trust their own body. Every child is different — some eat more, some less; some eat slowly, some quickly. Instead of imposing uniform standards, it is more important to understand their individual needs. This understanding sends the message that they are unique and that their needs matter.

However, proper guidance must accompany independence. If a child chooses only tasty but less nutritious food, parents should explain why the body needs nourishment. Guidance given with understanding is more effective than pressure. When a child understands the reason, they are more likely to make healthy choices on their own.

The family environment also plays an important role. If all family members eat healthy and balanced meals, it becomes natural for the child. Children learn by imitation. Therefore, parents should present the right example themselves. In this way, both independence and values grow together.

The connection between food and independence is also linked to self-confidence. When a child can make decisions about their hunger and preferences, they experience their own capability. This experience becomes the foundation of personality growth. If they are given the opportunity to express choices from an early age, they will grow up able to make bigger life decisions with confidence.

In conclusion, children's food is not merely a matter of nutrition; it is a foundation for independence and personality development. Through food, children can learn trust, responsibility, and self-control. Guidance should come not through pressure and control, but through love and understanding.

✿ Giving a child independence in food is giving them confidence in life. Guide them, but respect their voice — that is true parenting.

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Children's Natural Lifestyle

A child is nature's most innocent and natural creation. At birth, they are far from artificiality and symbolize purity and simplicity. Their laughter, playfulness, and curiosity are all in harmony with nature. However, as they grow, modern lifestyles, technology, and social pressures begin to affect this natural simplicity. In such circumstances, the idea of a "natural lifestyle" becomes very important. For children, a natural lifestyle is not just a matter of health, but the foundation of overall personality development.

A natural lifestyle means living in connection with nature — both physically and mentally. Fresh air, sunlight, open spaces, simple food, and regular play are all part of it. Today, children spend most of their time indoors, especially in front of screens. Mobile phones, television, and video games have become part of their daily routine. As a result, the tradition of playing outdoors has declined. This reduces their physical activity and weakens their connection with nature.

A child's body is in a stage of growth. They enjoy running, jumping, climbing, and exploring. These activities are not just for entertainment, but essential for the development of the body and brain. Playing in open air strengthens their lungs, sunlight provides necessary vitamins, and playing in natural surroundings improves mental health. When a child plays in the soil, touches trees, and listens to the sounds of birds, they connect with the basic elements of life.

Simple and nutritious food is also an important part of a natural lifestyle. Fresh vegetables, fruits, lentils, and grains provide balanced nutrition. Packaged and processed foods can be harmful to the body. Providing natural and home-cooked meals helps maintain a child's health and keeps their taste balanced. Simple food is not only beneficial for health, but it also conveys the message of simplicity and moderation in life.

An important aspect of a natural lifestyle is regularity. Sleeping on time, waking up on time, and eating at regular intervals help keep the body balanced. In today's world, staying up late and following irregular routines is becoming common among children. This affects their physical and mental health. A natural lifestyle teaches discipline and balance.

Nature is equally important for mental well-being. When a child plays in open spaces, they feel free from stress. Spending time in natural surroundings enhances concentration and creativity. In today's fast-paced and competitive world, academic pressure on children is increasing. In such situations, a natural lifestyle provides mental relaxation and joy.

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The family environment also plays an important role in maintaining a natural lifestyle. If parents themselves spend excessive time on screens, children will imitate them. Children learn by observation. Therefore, family members should set an example by connecting with nature. Going for walks together, spending time in a garden, or playing outdoor games strengthens family bonds as well.

A natural lifestyle also develops responsibility and sensitivity in children. When they become familiar with trees, animals, and the environment, they develop respect and care for nature. In this way, nature provides not only health but also values.

However, all this is possible only when society and parents become aware. Preparing children only for academic achievement is not enough; they must be prepared for life. A natural lifestyle makes children physically strong, mentally stable, and emotionally rich.

In conclusion, a natural lifestyle for children is the foundation of their holistic development. A connection with nature leads them toward a healthy, joyful, and balanced life. Modern conveniences are useful, but they cannot replace nature.

✿ Keep children close to nature — give them the experience of fresh air, sunlight, and a natural way of living. A natural lifestyle is the true path to a healthy and happy future.

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Epilogue

Parenting is not merely a process of raising a child; it is a dialogue — a dialogue with their body, mind, and emotions. In this book, we have tried to understand food, motivation, hunger, sleep, and a child's inner needs. The core element of every topic is the same — awareness and sensitivity.

A child is not a blank page to be filled with our rules and expectations. They come with their own independent personality. Their body has its own rhythm, their mind has its own pace, and their emotions have their own language. When we truly listen to them — genuinely listen — parenting becomes not a duty, but a shared journey.

Instead of making food a reward, understanding it as nourishment; instead of motivating from the outside, awakening motivation from within; instead of reacting to every cry, trying to understand its cause — all of this depends on parental awareness. Guiding a child with trust rather than pressure proves far more fruitful in the long run.

The main message of this book is this: before trying to correct a child, try to understand them. When the child is hungry, offer food; when tired, offer rest; when confused, offer conversation; and when successful, offer unconditional love. These four pillars form the foundation of a healthy personality.

It is important to remember that there is no competition to become perfect parents. Mistakes are natural. But every day offers a new opportunity to begin again. Every moment with a child is a chance to learn — for them and for us.

In the end, the essence of parenting is very simple:

- ❁ Observe attentively.
- ❁ Listen patiently.
- ❁ Respond with understanding.
- ❁ And give unconditional love.

This path may not be easy, but it is the most meaningful. When a child grows with inner motivation, healthy habits, and emotional security, they become not just a successful person, but a sensitive and balanced human being.

That is the purpose of this book — a humble step toward conscious parenting. ❁

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